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Yuan Chu Cai

internal and external training

MEI HUA ZHUANG



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Poles of Plum Blossom



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Yuan Chu Cai
MEI HUA ZHUANG
Poles of Plum Blossom

Translation:

Wang Ke Ze
Leonid Serbin
Ekaterina Rycheva
Oleg Korshunov

Editor:

Andrew Timofeevich

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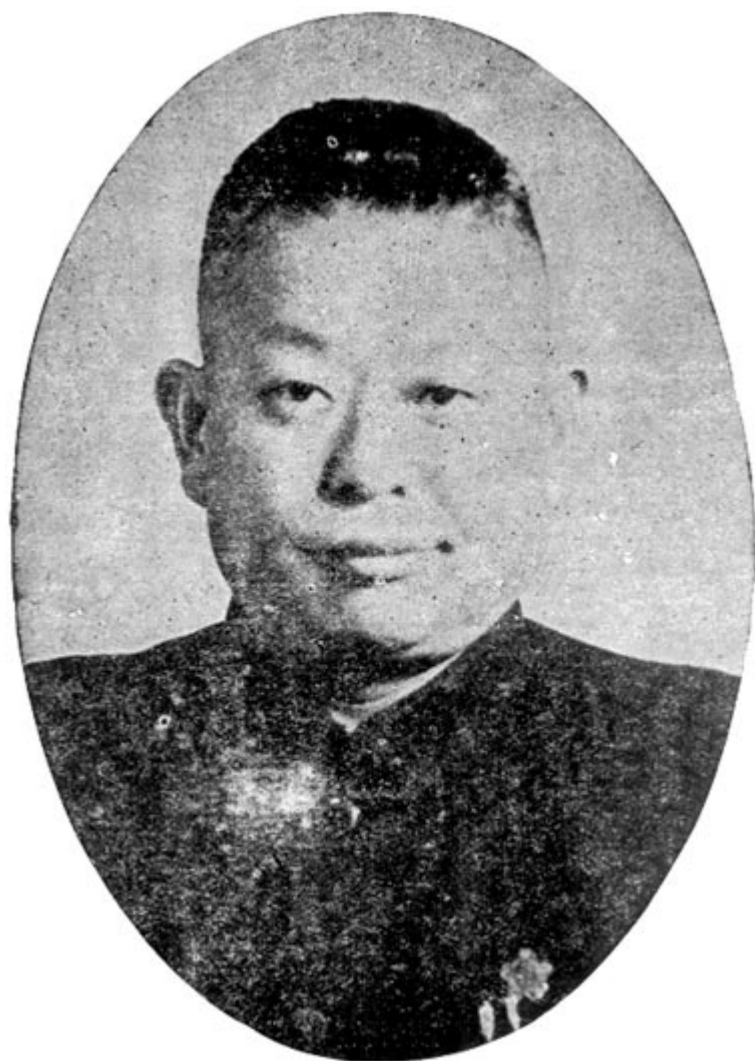
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Yuan Chu Cai

Preface

Martial arts practiced in our country¹ can be divided into “internal” and “external”, “soft” and “hard”. There is also division between styles with a “form” and without it². Styles without forms are “internal” styles; first of all they train JING³, QI⁴ and SHEN⁵. The styles that have (external) form are “external” styles; they are intended to train muscles, skeleton (bones) and skin. However, it is merely general deliberations which do not give an answer how one must exercise to reach top mastery and not to end in deadlock. How can one individually, during many months and years, persistently improve GONG FU and achieve big results?

A saying goes: “Strength can not overcome a style (technique)⁶, a style can not overcome mastery (GONG)⁷”. Or they say: “A master of strength is not the master of a style yet, a master of a style is not the master of internal art⁸ yet.” What is meant when it is said that “strength can not overcome a style”? Let’s take, for instance, a case when a hawker becomes a soldier. Thanks to his profession he is able to carry heavy loads, that is, he has physical strength. But if he engages the enemy with those skills, he will be far from perfection with helpless movements of his arms and legs. Even the possession of

Editor’s notes:

¹ China is meant here.

² Here “forms” imply a set of formalized methods of a style, i.e. its “external” form.

³ JING, primary vital substance, foundation of life.

⁴ QI, vital energy, an analog of the Indian “prana”.

⁵ SHEN, spiritual, conscious origin.

⁶ Here hieroglyph QUAN, “fist”, stands; it can also be translated as “style”, “technique”.

⁷ GONG, it is “internal” mastery that is meant here.

⁸ It implies that the acquirement of “internal” art is the highest form of mastery.

strength of several hundreds and thousands JUNS⁹ does not give a chance to use one's abilities effectively. It happens because of lack of coordination between movements of arms, eyes, torso and waist, stances and motions. If you remain to be an ignorant, then each hand raising, each kick, each step in a combat with the enemy will be ineffective. That's why it is said that strength alone can not overwhelm a style.

What is meant when it is said that “a style can not overcome mastery”? The man who reached mastery in a style, i.e. in “external art”, displays dexterity in arm and legs methods, is in command of his torso and waist; his movements are swift and quick. Movements of an ordinary man are often strained and awkward, a fight with him is like breaking a withered tree, and it is an easy task for a specialist. But if a master of “external art” engages a master of an “internal art”, he is “like an ant, trying to swing a big tree”. Masters of “external art” have bronze muscles and iron bones, filled QI and unflinching spirit SHEN. Using force, they intimidate their enemy and bend to their will. But it is merely external force, acting on the external level. It is not effective against an expert in internal art. Therefore it is said that “a style can not overcome mastery” and we find a proof to that everywhere.

For each man, improving his “internal art”, there are hundreds and thousands of trainees in “external art”. This fact explains the following saying: “It is easy to train a style but it is difficult to upgrade mastery.” Therefore, there are a lot of people who train a style and only a few who train mastery (GONG FU). From ancient times till now we see fighters, courageous and artful in combats, who by far surpass natural abilities of the man. They had to overcome thousands of difficulties, deliver thousands of blows during hundreds of training sessions, equally succeed mastery and strength in order

Editor's notes:

⁹ JUN, a measure of weight equal to 30 JINs, it is about 15 kg.

to comprehend secrets of mastership for a short time. Meng-Tse¹⁰ said: “My kindheartedness is supported by nature of Spirit. With grandeur you reach firmness and envelop everything betwixt the Sky and the Earth.” The man who learns martial arts must incessantly repeat that saying.

There is a section on training of special force in each style of WU SHU. Usually it contains such exercises as, for example, “poles of plum blossom”, “iron palm”, “lantern of seven stars”, “gold bell”, “iron shirt”, “gold coins”, “arrow and arbalest” and many others. All those exercises belong to “internal” mastery GONG FU and must be done correctly from methodological point of view, regularly, determinately, and persistently. The best way is to exercise twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. On the whole, the sequence of training process is as follows: at first, it is necessary to acquire the technique of a style (“external mastery”) to develop abilities of arms and legs and then train “internal mastery” with the aim of strengthening muscles, sinews and bones. A proverb is passed on from one generation to another among those who practice martial arts: “The style is the flesh of mastery, mastery (GONG FU) is the skeleton of the style”. Therefore, style and mastery are interconnected; one can not be neglect in favor of the other. Only exercising in both yield good results, those two aspects are closely interconnected.

Although it is said that is a single way to martial art, actually it is wide and varied. Recently a situation emerged when “fighters” who learned one or two forms (TAO) with weapon or without it started to talk about some school, some style passed down to them by tutor. Nonsense! The little that is widely

Editor’s notes:

¹⁰ Meng-Tse, teacher Meng, Mencius, Meng Ke, Zi Yu, Chinese thinker, the second after Confucius (“The Next after the Perfect Wise” – YA SHENG), one of the founders of Confucianism and forerunner of Neoconfucianism, author of the classic treatise of the same name, MENG-TSE, included into “the Thirteen Canons” (SHI SAN JING) and “The Four Books” (SI SHU) at the beginning of the II millennium B.C. (during the dynasty of Song).

taught does not include secrets of family WU SHU styles closed to strangers. And if you look through the fence, they look like “Yelang imagining itself a great state” [A legend of the Han epoch narrates how an Emperor’s ambassador came from the capital to the principality of Yelang that was situated on the south of China and the local ruler arrogantly asked the ambassador: “Do you really think that China is bigger than my principality?”]. A connoisseur laughs at such stupidity but at present it is a rare thing, indeed.

Earlier I wrote the following books: SHAOLIN JINGANG QUAN (“Diamond Fist of Shaolin”), WUDANG BAGUA QUAN (“The Style of Eight Trigrams from Wudang”), YUE FEI QUAN (“The Style of Marshal Yue Fei”), FO JIA QUAN (“The Style of Buddhistic Family”), CHUN YANG JIAN (CHUN YANG’s Sword”), MEI HUA DAO (“Broadsword of Plum Blossom”), LIU HE GUN (“Pole of Six Correspondences”) and some others. Being limited by my modest knowledge, I barely touched upon some aspects of martial arts in those books and included into them only small part of the problem. At present¹¹ many secret aspects of WU SHU are becoming public. Several magazines on martial arts are issued, books are published. Thanks to those publications many famous schools of WU SHU have become well-known both in China and abroad and their heritage is not lost for devotees of WU SHU. Here I expressed my humble opinion about great achievements.

Editor’s notes:

¹¹ The date of the first publication of the book is unknown. It is supposed to be the 40-th of XX century.

Chapter I.

WAI GONG and NEI GONG

Differentiation between “Internal” and “External” Mastery.

There is a widespread view that TAI CHI QUAN is “inner mastery” (NEI GONG) and SHAOLIN QUAN “external mastery” (WAI GONG). It is absolutely farfetched differentiation; besides, it contradicts to known facts of history. If we turn to historical records, we shall find that Zhang San Feng, the legendary founder of the style TAI CHI QUAN, at first took lessons at Shaolin and received his knowledge there. According to written sources master Zhang left Shaolin for the mountains of WUDANG in the south at the end of the dynasty of SONG¹². He brought with him five orthodox styles of Shaolin called “Dragon” (LONG), “Snake” (SHE), “Crane” (HE), “Tiger” (HU), and “Leopard” (BAO). Later those styles were transformed and supplemented with esoteric Taoist methods aimed at training spirit (SHEN), muscles (JIN), breathing (QI), motion (DONG), bones (GU). So came into being the art of TAI CHI, later the style of BA GUA sprang up on its base, those styles were passed on from generation to generation and reached our days. “Softness” prevails in the movements of those styles but in itself it is not “internal mastery” yet. On the contrary, the movements in Shaolin styles of WU SHU are hard and fierce but it does not mean that the Shaolin school gives attention only to “external mastery”.

Editor’s notes:

¹² SONG, a dynasty and empire in China (960 – 1279).

At the time of its flourishing the Shaolin monastery passed on knowledge to a lot of disciples (among laymen) and Buddhist monks, and that teaching was widespread outside the monastery. That's why styles of the Shaolin school were called WAI JIA, "Outer family". TAO (Taoist styles) were practiced in the mountains of WUDANG, this knowledge was carefully hidden from outsiders and on those grounds Taoist styles were named NEI JIA, "Inner family". In such a way differentiation between "internal" and "external" styles has arisen. As far as "internal mastery" is concerned, all traditional styles, whether they are NEI JIA or WAI JIA, attach great importance to it. Let's take as an example the method "Swords cut, axes slash but can not harm" (DAO PI FU KAN ER BUNG EN RU). It undoubtedly is a method of "internal" training which improves "internal mastery". However, from methodological point of view it belongs to the section YING GONG ("Mastery in hardness"), as it aims at the improvement of body ability to bear heavy blows with cold steel. It proves that both "hard" and "soft" methods can be available in "external" and "internal" training and the opinion that only "softness" is available in "internal" training and only "hardness" in "external" training is erroneous.

Section 1.

NEI GONG

Internal Mastery.

(1) Persistence and carefulness

Whether you train the style or improve your mastery, in both cases peace of mind and suppression of passions are required. Constancy must be present in persistence, zeal in learning promotes clarity of the mind; when the mind is clear, intrepidity appears. Intrepidity will help to overcome enemies with a technique which surpasses yours. By controlling seven senses and six emotions¹³ it is necessary to protect your organism like a precious nephrite. It is necessary to curtail your desires and reject external factors (irritants) which hamper your perfection. Success in exercising can be achieved during two or three long weeks of hard training and one night, lying in bed, it is possible to reach full mastery (to begin to see clearly). But if the organism lacks YUAN QI¹⁴, it will be very difficult to acquire mastery.

(2) Concentration

Concentration is extremely important on the way to mastery. With the aid of concentration, QI can be calmed down; while condensing, it transforms into

Editor's notes:

¹³ General name for human senses and emotions.

¹⁴ YUAN QI, "primordial QI", one of the kinds of QI, inherent in the human body. YUAN QI is "inherited" (received from birth) and ensures functioning of the body as a single system and determines individual features of a man. YUAN QI is thought to be the ruler of all QIs.

spirit (SHEN¹⁵); while condensing, the spirit transforms into peace of mind (JIN). If the spirit is in disorder, giddiness and faints are possible. During a fight with the enemy you now advance, now retreat, now rise up, now go down, but you must not move in disordered manner, all your movements must be dedicated to an exact inner plan. Besides, you must see the essence of combat order of the enemy and mentally penetrate his plans. Therefore, vision pays an important role. With vision one can concentrate attention. Without acquiring concentration you can not make progress in mastery and loose all you reached. When you train an exercises, concentrate on the external form and listen to the sound of the wind. Try to be like Da Mo (Bodhidharma) who, sitting against a wall, was in meditation for nine years, and for him the sound of flying midges was like a roar of a bull. That really is training of the Spirit which yields tremendous effect.

(3) Training QI

A man who trains only for style (“external technique”) is hardly able to immerse QI into DANTIAN, not to say about moving QI to extremities. A man who trains for mastery (GONG FU) is able of moving QI throughout the body; he can make QI move outward as well. It is what is called “outside rest, inside movement”. However, those abilities in themselves (without “external techniques”) do not increase the power of arms and legs. It is necessary the QI flow to fill breast, stomach and side parts of ribs, reach the point TIAN TING¹⁶ while moving up and the points DI KUNG¹⁷ while moving down. It

Editor’s notes:

¹⁵ SHEN, spiritual energy, spirituality, spirit.

¹⁶ TIAN TING, lit. “Celestial palace”, head crown.

¹⁷ DI KUNG, lit. “empty earth”, a point on the sole in its central part.

follows from the above why a man who trains for mastery puts JIN¹⁸, SHEN and QI in the first place.

(4) Rearing QI

“Emptiness” and “fullness”¹⁹ are characteristic of condition of QI in the body of a grown-up man, it is necessary to pay equal attention to two of those indexes and regulate them in due manner. If the body of a man is weak and his blood is bad, his QI will be surely weak (“empty”). If the body is strong and blood is lively, its QI is dry (“filled”). Weak QI easily bleeds the body and too “filled” QI leads to the excess of “fire”, two of those opposite conditions equally lead to diseases caused by QI disorders. Therefore, a man who improves his mastery, no matter if he is strong or weak, must countervail “emptiness” and “fullness”. “Rearing” QI and control over its excess are mutually complementary methods, equally important. It is very useful; as you know, mastery must, above of all, be inside the man.

(a) Method of transformation of “emptiness” into “fullness”

If man’s health is weak and his blood is bad, on no account excess physical force must be used while training to improve mastery. In that case the following exercises must be executed: stand uprightly, straighten both legs, feet must be on shoulder width or wider. Place both hands on sides at the waist level so that four fingers will point

Editor’s notes:

¹⁸ JING, “reproducing energy”, the basis of the vital force of the man; in Taoist alchemy JING transforms into QI and QI into the spiritual energy SHEN.

¹⁹ “Emptiness” and “fullness” are synonyms of “insufficiency” and “excess”.

forward and the thumb backward, at that HU KOU²⁰ adjoins both sides of protrusions of pelvis bones. Spread your chest and slightly throw it out. Keep the head vertically, the eyes are open, the mouth is somewhat close, the tongue tip presses to the upper palate. Very slowly “spit out” QI from the breast and stomach through the mouth. Then, slowly breathing in through the nose, pull in new fresh QI to fill the breast and stomach and immerse it into DANTIAN. It is necessary to raise yourself on tiptoe at the end of breath-in, at that moment the heels leave the ground, and lower yourself on the full feet while starting to breathe out. Make that exercise 30 to 50 times, gradually increasing the number day by day. In the course of that exercise QI from DANTIAN gradually spreads into all parts of the body. That is one of the methods of transformation of “emptiness” into “fullness”; as a result of it the weak QI that bleeds the body concentrates and immerses into DANTIAN.

(b) Method regulating of fullness

If the body is strong and blood is normal, QI is abundant. However, the excess of QI leads to the predominance of “fire” in the body. In extreme cases it can be displayed in redness of face, trembling and weakness of arms and legs, dimness of mind and disordered speech. They are symptoms of sick QI when the primordial QI (YUAN QI) has prematurely been spent. To prevent and eliminate such disorders, the technique of immersion and pacification of QI must be used in the position of sitting meditation (PAN JUO). It is necessary to exercise in the morning and in the evening. Cross your legs in a sitting position (on the floor), the left foot lies on the right knee and the right foot on the

Editor's notes:

²⁰ HU KOU, lit. “tiger mouth”, the space between the thumb and forefinger when they are spread to sides.

left knee. The soles of feet point upward, hands are open on hips and palms also point upward. The torso is upright. At first it is enough to exercise during half an hour, gradually the time is to be increased up to one hour. This method is called LUOHAN SHEN QI GONG – “Luohan cultivates QI”.

(5) Streamlining QI breath

Streamlining breathing process is of great importance for human body, as well as for QI and blood, flowing inside it. During training sessions for “internal mastery” (NEI GONG) a breathing-in and a breathing-out must be deep and long, be done carefully and steadily. At the first stage duration of a breathing-in may be five seconds: during the first and second seconds QI fills the breast, during the third and fourth second QI fills the stomach, during the fifth second QI fills the whole body. Then the cycle of QI movement is over while breathing out. The duration of a breathing-in and breathing-out can be the same or different. When QI fills the body, a breathing-out is immediately done; when QI runs out, breathe in. When one trains for an “external” technique (style), one breathes out while striking with an arm or leg; when one draws an arm or a leg to the body, one breathes in. In that case the force is naturally used, as it matches with QI movement in the body. After reaching some level of mastery, QI, while breathing in, spreads throughout the body; while breathing out, it dissipates outwards, spreading from the stomach and the breast to extremities. But one has to watch the excessive QI not to accumulate in the body; equally, one must not allow too great depletion of it; carefulness is needed in the use of that treasure. Never allow stagnation of QI in the diaphragm. Those are general requirements to the work for QI harmonization which allows reaching mastery in using methods.

Section 2.

WAI GONG

External Mastery.

Comprehension of “external mastery” will be a relatively simple target for a man who has acquired “internal mastery”. By developing the ability to move QI throughout the entire body and concentrate effort in four limbs with the aid of “internal” exercises, it is possible to fill in muscles and bones with real strength. At the same time skin coats²¹ can be made stronger and thicker and muscle mass developed through training “external skills”. Such exercises as “lifting weight”, “throwing up a stone padlock”, “rotating an iron yoke”, “striking a sand bag”, “attacking a wooden dummy”, “rolling a tube filled with sand”, and many others – all that is training “external mastery”, its basic methods. At present exercises “lifting weight”, “throwing up a stone padlock”, “rotating an iron yoke” and other similar methods of GONG FU enjoy the most popularity. Those exercises are relatively simple and can be done everywhere. Exercises “striking a sand bag”, “attacking a wooden dummy”, “rolling a tube filled with sand” make up another group. They are mobile training methods and at present those exercises are practiced much more seldom. However, it is with the aid of those methods that is possible to strengthen “five tops”²² and considerably improve “six coordinations”²³. It is a very important chain in training a martial skill which must not be lost for

Editor's notes:

²¹ “Skin coat” in Chinese medicine is understood not only as the skin itself but as a layer of muscles under the skin as well.

²² “Five tops” mean head, arms and legs.

²³ “Six coordinations” in the tradition of Chinese martial arts implies the coordination of the back and shoulders, shoulders and elbows, elbows and hands, waist and hip joints, hip joints and knees, knees and feet.

future generations. These effective training methods of GONG FU are described below.

(A) DA SHA DAI

Striking at a Sand Bag.

Sew a bag, 1 CHI and 2 CUNs (40 cm) in length and 8 CUNs (26.7 cm) in diameter from a thick canvas material. Fill it with gravel or small iron balls. At first the weight of the bag must be 24 JINs (12 kg), in a couple of weeks it may be increased up to 36 JINs (18 kg), in three more weeks up to 48 JINs (24 kg). Tie to the bag a thick cord, about 2 CHIs (66.6 cm) long, the cord must not be too long to avoid strong swinging of the bag. Hang up the bag so that its upper part will be at the breast level. It is the first training stages described below. After you successfully acquired the exercise with one bag, add one more similar bag. Hang up both bags on a thick cords, 3 CHIs (1 m) long. The distance between the bags must be 1 ZHANG (3.33 m). Lower parts of the bags must be at the level of your waist. It is the second training stage.

The first stage. Push off the bag with both hands, stay waiting for the bag to return to its place. At that moment take a step forward and deliver a counter blow at the bag with the upper part of your head. Then, in such manner, strike at the bag with your shoulder joints, elbows, knees, fists, and palms. You may alternate all those techniques at your discretion. It is necessary to carry out three training sessions a day, half an hour each. Then gradually increase exercising time and mastery level will also be increased gradually.

The second stage. Stand between two bags. First, push one bag and immediately jump aside, turn and come close to the other bag, then strike at it.

Pass from one bag to the other and hit them without stopping. It is necessary to improve the speed of arms and make blows one after another continuously. The exercise is aimed at the development of the ability to deliver a series of well-aimed and strong blows. As a result “five tops” strengthen and “six coordinations” improve. Blows must be made with all parts of your body: head, fists, elbows, forearms, knees, shins, and feet. During that practice special attention must be paid to the exercise “pile” in the stance of “rider” (MA BU)²⁴, which will allow join QI movement inside the body with the movements of limbs. Gradually prolong training time. It should be stressed that it is not only the exercise for making limbs stronger. The exercise improves the ability to make continuous blows with all parts of the body, quickly proceed from one technique to another, and use the entire range of methods.

(B) JI MU REN

Attacking a Wooden Dummy.

(1) There are several methods of making a wooden dummy, but in any case such dummy must be made of hard wood to avoid its breaking by blows. The height of the dummy must be 5 CHIs (166.5 cm), its head must be on the top, the upper part of the wooden dummy must widen like the chest of the man and the lower part must be installed on a small carriage. The dummy must be reinforced with stiffening ribs inside to withstand powerful blows without damage. The carriage in the lower part is needed for the dummy to move after blows struck at its head, sides and chest. It is necessary to put a padded jacket

Editor's notes:

²⁴ An immovable state in the rider stance (MA BU) is meant.

or any other clothes made of thick material on the dummy in order not to damage your arms and legs while striking.

(2) The training method with a wooden dummy is as follows. Punch with the right fist at a side part of the dummy. Then immediately strike with the left arm or turn sideways and kick with the right leg. Then immediately kick with the left leg and then strike with the right palm and so on. Pursue the dummy while it will be moving away from you under the impact of your blows and deliver variety of arm and leg blows. The exercise should be repeated day after day, month after month and then your mastery will reach unexceptionally high level.

(C) GUN SHA TONG

Rolling a Tube with Sand.

(1) To do the below-given exercises, at first you will need a piece of a bamboo stem, 1 CHI and 2 CUNs (40 cm) long, and at next training stages a stem, 2 CHIs and 8 CUNs (93cm) long. The outer surface of the bamboo stem must be ideally smooth and straight, the inside of the stem must be hollow. The cavity inside the stem must be filled with small stones mixed with sand to get the weight of the bamboo tube equal to 16 JINs (8 kg). Then, some time later, the weight of the tube must be increased to 24 JINs (12 kg) and to 36 JINs (18 kg) in future. An increase in tube weight will lead to a considerable body strain; therefore, the weight must be gradually increased with the growth of your level of training.

(2) The training method with a bamboo tube is as follows. Take the tube with both hands and place it on the inner bends of elbows. Then straighten the

arms and stretch them horizontally in front of you, bend wrists to the outer side of the forearms so that the centers of palms point forward and fingers up. Roll the tube back and forth from wrists to shoulders and back. The exercise should be done daily, three times a day, each time for half an hour. After the execution of the previous exercise, put the tube on the table and press on it with force from above with both forearms, roll the tube on the table forth and back, still pressing with force on it with the inner side of your forearms. Roll the tube from wrists to elbows and back. Besides the inner side of the forearms this exercise strengthens elbows well. This exercise is also done during half an hour. After finishing it, sit down on a chair, tightly press your legs to each other, stretch them forward and put them with their heels on another chair opposite you. Put the tube on your shins and roll it on the legs back and forth. This exercise must also be done during half an hour. If redness appears on arms or legs in the course of training, it can be washed with decoction.

Chapter II.

YING GONG

Mastery of Hardness.

There is a great variety of YING GONG techniques and names and similar techniques can have different names in different styles of WU SHU. However, in spite of dissimilarities in appearance, the essence and the orientation of those techniques are common. Besides, their level of complexity is not the same; they must be acquired in some sequence. For instance, the exercise ROU DAO – “Massaging and rubbing” must be acquired first followed by the method QIAO DA – “Tapping”. The sequence of such kind improves QI circulation in the body, makes muscles tougher, skin thicker and stronger, internal organs stronger and less sensitive to shocks. The “external techniques” will be improved by it and mastery will increase by many times. Progress in learning the martial art will be evident; the learner will be able to exercise more intensively and in more rigid conditions. Skills that the learner will acquire by that time will seem to a detached onlooker to be deadly, learner’s movements will be powerful, fast and strong and the learner will look like a master.

In order to acquire YING GONG, the “Mastery of Hardness”, there is no need of a sword or any other weapon, no need to raise heavy stones or use some mechanical aids. This art has no mystic in it.

Below we shall give the description of exercises.

(A) ROU DAO FA

Technique of Massage and Rubbing.

Before starting to do the exercise, it is necessary to put feet on shoulders width, straighten the torso and stand upright. Breathe out completely, then perform two or three deep breathings-in for QI to go from up to down and fill the body, tightly close your mouth and eyes and concentrate QI in DANTIAN. Spread the chest, closely press the left palm to the back a little above the waist, press the right palm to the torso in the front, a little below the chest on the central line of the body, between the eighth and twelfth vertebra, above the point QI QIANG²⁵ and a little below the heart. Then, slowly move the right palm from the right to the left and from above downward, slightly pressing and closely clasping the palm to the body as if it is glued. At the same time the left palm moves from below upward and to the right, clasping to the back. When the right palm sinks to the level of the waist, the left palm must rise to the level of the twelfth vertebra. Further, the palms continue moving in a circle while massaging the stomach and the back.

The exercise must be done each day during 49 days. It is necessary to execute three series of 72 circular movements in each every day. As a result of it, QI will fill your breast, stomach and side ribs. It is the first step on the way to acquiring YING GONG.

(B) QIAO DA FA

Technique of Tapping.

During the second stage of acquiring mastery in YING GONG Qi must be diverted from the breast and abdominal cavity to the head and extremities. Take for this purpose a piece of cloth and sew a small bag, one CHI and two

Editor's notes:

²⁵ QI QIANG, lit. "Spear QI".

CUNs (about 40 cm) long and two CUNs (6.6 cm) wide. Fill the bag with beans and tie its ends into knots. Do the following exercises to improve Qi circulation in the body: take the bag by one of its ends and strike at your stomach, chest and back with the other end. Then strike at the head, then at forearms and shins, arms and legs. This exercise must be done each day, three times a day, each time during one hour. One must strike while breathing in. Such training makes the whole body considerably stronger, improves circulation of the blood and elasticity of vessels, and gives hardness to things that are soft by their nature, fill things that were empty before. One must not apply considerable physical force while doing this exercise, especially at first. The practice should not be shorter than half a year.

During the third stage of acquiring the skill YING GONG you must gradually replace beans in the bag with small stones (pebbles), then with metal filings. The replacement is to be done in seven stages. Make slow slaps on the whole body with the bag, starting from the head and finishing at the center of soles. This exercise should be done each day, three times a day, each time during an hour. After exercising in such manner half a year or one year proceed to stick blows. Take a straight and smooth wooden stick, 12 CUNs long (about 40 cm), and strike with it over the whole body. It allows making muscle corset firmer, skin much thicker and stronger. Force of blows must be so as not to feel much pain. This exercise must be done during 365 days, which will make the body stronger and allow protecting it against cuts made by a knife and an ax. The exercise practiced so will result in that cold steel will leave no scars and cuts on the body.

Chapter III.

QING GONG

Mastery of Lightness.

QING GONG holds a very important place in teaching WU SHU, especially for those who learn dramatic art. It is better to start training oneself in young years when muscles are elastic and joints flexible. It is necessary to start from simple basic movements, for example, somersaults. Your skills can be improved so that you will become as deft as a monkey. As far as dodging and jumping are concerned, they can be acquired in the course of learning WU SHU. But there are special techniques, namely ZONG YUE FAN TENG – “Moving by jumps and somersaults” or FEI YANG ZOU BI – “Flying up to a roof ridge and run up the wall”. To acquire them, special and serious training is needed²⁶.

Below we shall tell about three training methods. They are ZHUANG DING ZOU BI – “Grasping nails and climbing up a wall”, ZOU SUO – “Walking on a rope” and YUE ZHUANG – “Jumping from one pole to onto another”.

Editor's notes:

²⁶ Those methods are among 72 arts of Shaolin, they are described in detail in the book by Jing Zhong “Training Methods of 72 Arts of Shaolin”. [See details >>](#)

(A) ZHUANG DING ZOU BI

Grasping Nails and Climbing Up a Wall.

The first stage. Drive in two iron nails, 5 CUNs²⁷ (16.5 cm) long, to a wall at the height of 5 CHIs (166.5 cm) from the ground. The nails must be at the same height and spaced by 1.2 CHI²⁸ (40 cm) on a horizontal line. You must exercise in the following way: stand at the distance of five steps from the wall and look at nails on it. You must be bare-footed (without shoes and socks). It is required that toes could catch on the wall. Make four quick steps, starting the movement with the right leg. At that time the distance to the wall is one step. Set the sole of the right foot against the wall and catch a nail with the left hand. Immediately set the left foot against the wall and catch another nail with the right hand. The torso must be kept vertically; the knees must not be bent too much. Hold this position for ten seconds and then return to the initial position. Exercise in such a manner many times. If you can remain in the above position for 3-5 minutes, it means you have achieved first results.

The second stage. Drive in two iron or bamboo nails, 3 CUNs (10 cm) long, to a half of their length to the wall. The right nail must be at the height of 6 CHIs (2 m) and the left nail at the height of 7 CHIs (2.33 m) from the ground. Horizontal distance between the nails remains the same – 1.2 CHIs (40 cm). The training procedure is as follows: stand at the distance of six steps and look at the nails on the wall. Make five quick steps, starting the movement with the right leg. During the sixth step set the sole of the left foot against the wall at the height of 1 CHI (33.3 cm) from the ground. Immediately step on the wall with the right foot. Catch the nail driven in at the height of 6 CHIs (2 m) with the right hand. Shift the left foot up and set its sole against the wall,

Editor's notes:

²⁷ CUN, a measure of length, equal to 3.3 cm.

²⁸ CHI, a measure of length, equal to 33.3 cm.

at the same time catch the nail at the height of 7 CHIs (2.33 m) with the left hand. The torso must be kept vertically; knees must not be bent too much. Hold this position for ten seconds. If you can remain in this position for 3-5 minutes, it means full success will come soon.

The third stage. The further exercising is to be carried out without nails. Stand at the distance of seven steps from the wall and start the movement with the right leg. During the sixth step the leg is in front. Set the sole of the right foot against the wall, five fingers of the right hand are also set against the wall. Immediately the left foot rises up and sets against the wall above the right foot, at the same time the left hand also sets against the wall. So, by setting hands and feet against the wall in turn, climb up the wall. If you diligently exercise in the above-described manner, you will surely be a success.

(B) ZOU SUO

Walking on a Rope.

The first stage. Prepare a rope with the diameter of 1 CUN or a little bigger (3 or 4 cm) and two poles, 3 CHIs (1 m) long. Hammer in those poles into the ground firmly. The distance between the poles must be 1 ZHANG (3.33 m). Tie the ends of the rope to the poles at the height of 1.2 CHI (40 cm). Put the right foot on the top of the pole and the left foot on the rope. Strain the front part of both feet. Slowly move the right foot forward. Keep the torso upright; equally distribute body weight between the right and left foot. Set the arms to sides to look like a bird with spread wings, keep balance with the aid of your arms. While moving, the upper part of the torso must not be bent or shifted to sides. If the torso suddenly starts shifting, for example, to the left, the left arm

must smoothly be brought down to shift the center of gravity to the right, so restoring balance. When you can make 100 steps in succession without falling down, it means the first result has been achieved.

The second stage. Take a rope with the diameter two times smaller than the diameter of the rope used before, and two poles, 5 CHIs (166.5 cm) long. Hammer in the poles into the ground firmly with the distance of 1.6 ZHANG (5.33 m). Tie the ends of the rope to the poles at the height of 3 CHIs (1 m). The training method remains the same.

The third stage. Take a steel rope with the diameter of one third of CUN (10-12 cm) approximately and two poles of 7 CHIs (2.33 m). The training method remains the same, but the distance between the poles at that stage must be 2 ZHANGs (6.66 m) and the rope must be fixed at the height of 5 CHIs (166.5 cm). While walking on the rope, the torso must remain upright and the arms be spread to sides to keep balance. One must exercise hundreds of times to succeed in walking on the rope like on a flat road. The aim will be achieved after it.

(C) YUE ZHUANG

Jumping from one Pole to Another.

The first stage. Take four poles, 1.2 CHI²⁹ in girth and 2.4 CHIs (80 cm) long, and dig them into the ground in corners of an imaginary square. The poles must be oriented according to sides of the horizon. Thus, each pole has a conventional name: eastern, southern, western, and northern. The upper

Editor's notes:

²⁹ The length of the circumference of a pole which is equal to 40 cm is meant. The diameter of a pole is 12.7 cm accordingly.

ends of the poles must be at the height of 1.2 CHI (40 cm) from the ground. The distance between the poles on the outer perimeter must be 2.8 CHIs (93.2 cm). The training procedure is as follows: put the left foot on the eastern pole, place your hands on the waist, and keep the torso upright. The ends of the poles must support the front part of the feet. Put the right foot on the southern pole. Then put the left foot on the western pole and the right foot on the northern pole and so on, while moving in a circle from one pole to another. It is necessary to exercise several times a day, gradually increasing the speed of movement.

The second stage. Take four poles, 0.8 CHI in girth (i.e. 8.5 cm in diameter) and 3.6 CHIs (1.2 m) long, and dig them into the ground. Their location pattern remains the same. The difference is in that now the poles must be 2.4 CHIs (80 cm) above the ground level and the distance between them along the outer perimeter must be 3.6 CHIs (1.2 m). The training procedure remains the same. If you put on an iron cuirass (breastplate) and tie lead ingots to legs for movement from one pole to another, no wonder that after taking off the load you will be able to jump far and high.

Chapter IV.

MEI HUA ZHUANG

Poles of Plum Blossom.

MEI HUA ZHUANG is one of fundamental methods with profound and inmost sense of the Martial Art. The source of this technique is hardly to be traced, as it has come down to us from ancient days in the form of legends and tales and has a long history. There are many astonishing things in the Celestial³⁰ and the training method MEI HUA ZHUANG is one of them.

The very first steps in learning the technique MEI HUA ZHUANG requires deep comprehension of everything you do, you must go into all smallest details. The base and essence of the method lies in the skill of motion, or “arts of steps”. Since ancient times the skill has been divided into two large sections, namely TIAN PANG ZHUANG –“Celestial poles” and DI PAN ZHUANG – “Terrestrial poles”. The first section mainly deals with static positions and various methods of steps and motion. Therefore, besides the name “Celestial poles” it has another name MA BU ZHUANG³¹. The second section mainly deals with techniques and continuous series of leg methods, so beside the name “Terrestrial poles” the section is also called LIAN HUAN ZHUANG³².

Editor's notes:

³⁰ The Celestial Empire is the ancient name of China.

³¹ MA BU ZHUANG, “Rider stance on poles”.

³² LIAN HUAN ZHUANG, “Poles of continuous (circular, cyclic) training”.

The first section, "Celestial poles", includes five separate techniques: DU LI ZHUANG, "Single pole"; ER LONG ZHUANG, "Poles of two dragons"; SAN XING ZHUANG, "Poles of three stars"; SI MEN ZHUANG, "Poles of four gates"; and MEI HUA ZHUANG proper, "Poles of plum blossom". All of the above techniques serve as a base, a kind of foundation for learners of Chinese martial arts; they allow improving individual mastery in several areas at the same time. Certainly, the first stage is the acquisition of stances, first of all, "Rider stance" (MA BU) and then the skill of motion ("steps"). The first section, "Celestial poles", deals with it. The second section, "Terrestrial poles", allows to significantly improving the execution of all leg methods and techniques; northern styles of WU SHU and their southern branches are especially rich in leg methods and techniques. Ancient masters teach us that arms and legs must be a single whole and move in coordination; it is necessary to hit the enemy continuously with both arms and legs. By practicing the exercises described in this book you yourselves will find that they are of tremendous importance.

Section 1.

TIAN PAN ZHUANG

Celestial Poles.

A. DU LI ZHUANG

Single Pole.

(1) To do the exercise, a small wooden pole with the length over 1 CHI (33.3 cm) is taken and solidly dug into the ground so that the length of the pole above the ground will be 1 CHI (33.3 cm). The diameter of the upper part of the pole must not exceed 2 CUNs (6.66 cm). The height of the pole must gradually be increased with time. Put the front part of the right foot on the pole, wave with arms from up downward and straighten the right leg. Then



Photo A.1

slowly bend the left leg in knee and lift it up, placing the left sole near the right knee. Stand on one leg. Keep both hands at your waist, straighten the torso and tilt it a little forward, look into the distance along a horizontal line. Concentrate yourself on DANTIAN. Some time later, you will feel QI fill

DANTIAN and spread throughout the entire body from there. The weight of the entire body completely rests on the right leg. After staying on the right leg for some time, repeat the exercise on the left leg. The time needed for doing the exercise on the right and left leg must be the same. It is the first exercise of DU LI ZHUANG (see **photo A.1**).

(2) To do the second exercise, stand with the right foot on the pole and straighten yourself, then squat on the right leg (it is necessary to squat low with foothold only on one leg) and stretch the left leg forward, slightly bending it in knee. Both arms are slightly bent in elbows and placed before the breast. During the execution of the exercise QI passes through the entire body and fills limbs. The full weight of the body rests on the right leg.



Photo A.2

After finishing the exercise for the right leg, repeat it, resting on the left leg. It is the second exercise of DU LI ZHUANG (see **photo A.2**).

(3) Stand with the right foot on the pole and straighten the right leg in knee. Then tilt the torso forward, straighten the left leg and stretch it backward. The head and the back must lie on one (horizontal) line, the back must be straight, do not lower your head. Part both arms to different sides – to the right and to the left like wings of an eagle, fingers must be spread, the centers of palms must face down. During execution of the exercise QI fills the entire body, accumulates in four limbs and fills them with strength. The whole mass of the body presses on the right foot, the torso must be without slightest bend. After finishing the exercise for the right leg, repeat it, resting on the left foot. It is the third exercise of DU LI ZHUANG also called FENG HUANG SAN YI – “Phoenix spreads its wings” (see photo A.3).

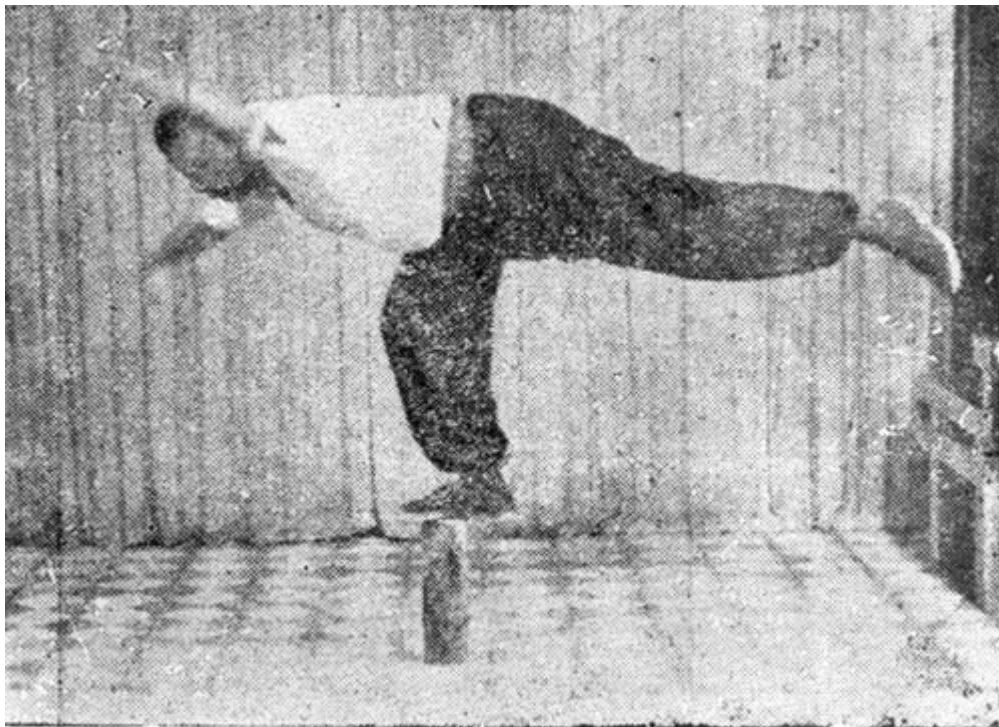


Photo A.3

B. ER LONG ZHUANG

Poles of Two Dragons.

(1) To master the exercise QI MA ZHUANG³³, you will need two small wooden poles of the same length on which you will stand to acquire this technique. Clench hands into fists, bend legs in knees, the lower part of the body must be “filled” (with QI and strength). Watch your elbows to be on one (horizontal) line. Knees are spread a little to sides. A breath-in is mainly made with the breast, therefore it is necessary to throw out your chest and pull in the stomach. Look forward, the mouth is closed, the lips are tightly pressed. While doing the exercise, arms must be bent in elbows, hands clenched into fists, the centers of the hands (on the side of the palm) must point up and inward. Body weight is equally distributed between the right and left foot. The shoulders must be spread, the head be kept straightly, without tilting. QI concentrates in DANTIAN and the strength completely accumulates in legs (see photo B.1).

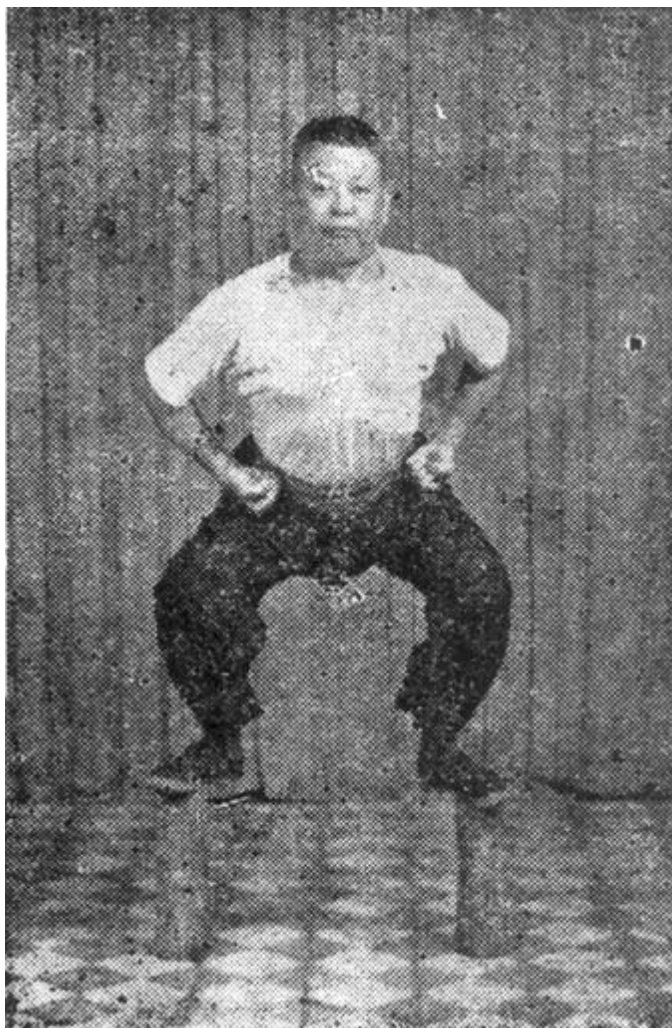


Photo B.1

Editor's notes:

³³ QI MA, lit. “to mount a horse”, “to straddle a horse”; ZHUANG, “pole(s)”; thus, QI MA ZHUANG can be translated as “sit upon poles” or “straddle poles”.

(2) The method of acquiring ZHI ZI ZHUANG³⁴ is similar to that one of the previous exercise. You will need two wooden poles for training as a foothold for your feet. For doing the exercise properly, it is necessary to stand with a turn to the left by 45 degrees. The left leg is in front of the right leg; both legs are slightly bent in knees. The position of the body resembles the form of hieroglyph ZHI (𠂔). The body “settles down”, you must feel as if the body has become heavier, two thirds of its mass being on the right leg and on third on the left leg. Both arms are bent in elbows, hands are clenched into fists. The left fist is put forward; its front part is exactly above the left toe. While breathing in, as in the previous exercise, the stomach is pulled in³⁵, the chest is thrown out forward. Do not tilt your head, keep it straight. The mouth must be closed. Look at the left fist. QI accumulates in DANTIAN, strength fills each of four limbs (see photo B.2).



Photo B.2

Editor's notes:

³⁴ ZHI ZI ZHUANG, “position in the form of hieroglyph ZHI (𠂔) on poles”.

³⁵ This method of breathing in the QI GONG practice is known as “reverse breathing”; while breathing in, the stomach is pulled in, while breathing out the stomach “pushed forward”.

(3) The method DING ZI ZHUANG³⁶ in its nature is similar to two of the previous exercises. Two small wooden poles of the same height are used to do the exercise; you must stand with both legs on the poles. While doing the exercise, the body is turned to the right by 45 degrees. The right leg is put forward and bent in knee. The position of the body resembles the form of hieroglyph DING (𠂔) (a nail). The body “settles down”, you must feel as if it has become heavier. The left leg accounts for sixty percent of body weight and the right leg for forty percent. Both arms are stretched to the right, fingers point at the same side like the toe of the right foot does. The upper edge of the left palm points up at the head and the lower edge at the leg and knee. The right palm is above the right foot. While doing the exercise, the head is kept straight, the mouth must tightly be closed. Look at the right palm. QI equally spreads throughout the entire body, strength concentrates in four limbs (see photo B.3).



Photo B.3

Editor's notes:

³⁶ DING ZI ZHUANG, “the position in the form of hieroglyph DING (𠂔) on poles”.

C. SAN XING ZHUANG

Poles of Three Stars.

To do this series of exercises, you will need three small wooden poles dug into the ground at the corners of an imaginary triangle. In the course of training you will move on pole tops and take various stances. It is necessary to move from one pole to another while breathing in, when the body is being filled with QI. In the course of doing the exercises one must apply some force.

(1) Three small wooden poles of approximately equal size, dug into the ground at the corners of an imaginary triangle, are used for doing all exercises of this cycle. At first, put the right foot on the pole located at the left corner of the triangle (see **photo C.1**), then put the left foot on the pole located at the front corner³⁷. Sink the body down and slightly bend your legs in knees. The right leg accounts for sixty percent of body weight and the left leg for forty percent. Pull in the stomach while breathing in. The body has a slight tilt to the right. The hands are in the position “eagle claws” (YIN ZHAO). The mouth is closed, the lips are



Photo C.1

Editor's notes:

³⁷ Relatively to the observer, see photo C.1.

tightly pressed together and stretched to form a straight line. Do not tilt the head, keep it straight. Your sight is directed forward horizontally. QI is evenly distributed throughout the body, strength is concentrated in four limbs (see **photo C.1**).

(2) DING BA BU³⁸ is similar to the previous exercise. Turn to the left from the previous position and stand with the left foot on the unoccupied pole, then stand with the right foot on the front pole. Bend your legs in knees and turn both knees forward, take the stance DING BA -“Nail and figure of eight”. As regard to the stance DING BA my tutor said: “A nail is not the nail, a figure of eight is not the figure of eight, three dimensions and four cardinal points can easily change their place.” Having grown heavy – that is an expected feeling about the body. Body weight is equally distributed between the right and left legs. Fingers are clenched, fists are in the position DA HU (“Tiger



Photo C.2

blow”). The right arm is straight in elbow, the right fist is in front of the right knee, and the left fist is near the stomach on the body central line. Your sight is at the right fist. Pull in your stomach while breathing in. QI concentrates in DANTIAN, strength fills four limbs (See **photo C.2**).

Editor’s notes:

³⁸ DING BA BU, “position of nail and figure of eight(八)”.

(3) YI JIAN BU³⁹ is similar to previous exercises. From the position of the previous exercise stand with the right foot on the unoccupied pole on your right and with the left foot on the front pole. Take the stance “bow” (GONG BU). In that position knees must be pointed forward, the left leg must be bent in front, the right leg is straight in back. While doing the exercise, the feeling must be as if the body is filled with weight. The most part of the body weight is distributed into the left leg. During a breathe-in the stomach is pulled in, the chest must be thrown out forward. Palms of both hands are clenched into fists, the arms are in the position FENG BI SHI⁴⁰. The head is set straight, without tilt, the lips are tightly pressed together. You look straight ahead. While doing the exercise, QI concentrates in DANTIAN, strength fills four limbs (See photo C.3).



Photo C.3

Editor's notes:

³⁹ YI JIAN BU, “position of sharp arrow.”

⁴⁰ FENG BI SHI, “the position of a sealing-up envelope.”

D. SI MEN ZHUANG

Poles of Four Gates.

This technique is based on the idea of four gates. Four small wooden poles dug on the sides of an imaginary square and situated in the directions of four cardinal points – north, south, west, and east are used to do the exercises of this cycle. The primary stance on which the technique is based is the rider's stance (MA BU). Perfection of the technique allows developing dexterity, exactness of motion, steadiness, and excellent response. Therefore, it is possible to exercise it on a flat surface during preparatory period.

(1) Four small wooden poles of approximately equal size dug into the ground at the corners of an imaginary square and oriented to four cardinal points are used to master the position TO HUA MA⁴¹. The right foot steps on the eastern pole. The left foot is put to the southern pole. Squat on the right leg, bending it in knee. The left leg is brought forward, its knee is only slightly bent. The right leg bears seven tenth of body weight and the left leg three tenth of it. The hands are on the



Photo D.1

Editor's notes:

⁴¹ TO HUA MA, "stance, supporting transformation".

waist, the shoulders are spread. Keep the head straight, without tilting it. The lips are tightly pressed together, you look straight ahead. QI is evenly distributed throughout the body and the strength mainly concentrates in legs (See photo D.1).

(2) The exercise in the position KUN LONG MA⁴² continues the previous one. The left foot remains at its place, the position of the right foot changes

from the eastern pole to the western one. The left leg is bent in knee, the right leg straightens; you take the stance KUN LONG MA. The left leg accounts for sixty percent of body weight and the right leg for forty percent. The position is firm, the center of gravity of the body is sunk down. Hands are in the position ZHUA ZHANG⁴³, the left hand applies pressing force down and the right hand is at the chest level and makes pushing effort in the left direction. While breathing in, the stomach is



Photo D.2

being pulled in. The head is set straight, the mouth is tightly clenched. You look straight forward. QI is concentrated in DANTIAN and strength is evenly distributed between four limbs (See photo D.2).

Editor's notes:

⁴² KUN LONG MA, "stance for bridling dragon."

⁴³ ZHUA ZHANG, lit. "palm-claws."

(3) The exercise PAO BIAN MA⁴⁴ is continuation of the two previous exercises. Change the position of the left leg for the eastern pole and that one of the right leg for the southern pole. The right leg is bent in knee and supports the main part of body weight, the left leg is only slightly bent in knee and brought forward. The torso is turned with its right side forward. Hands are open, palms centers point forward, both arms are bent in front of the chest. There must be feeling of the body weighing heavily, keep the center of gravity low. Then you start moving in an arbitrary way to the left and to the right, forward and backward, changing one pole for



Photo D.3

another and taking positions 1-3. It is a method of training stances and motion. Do not rise the center of gravity, maintain the firmness and precision of positions; one must try to take lower stances. The head must be kept straight; the lips are tightly pressed together. You look forward. QI spreads throughout the body and strength concentrates in four limbs (See **photo D.3**).

Editor's notes:

⁴⁴PAO BIAN MA, "the horse gallops sidewise."

E. MEI HUA ZHUANG

Poles of Plum Blossom.

The history of the style MEI HUA ZHUANG goes down to high antiquity, it was then that the name came into existence. In the old times disciples acquired that skill by standing on high poles, and when they got down to the ground their steps did not leave any traces on the surface. If you like to believe legends, the skill was formed by knights from the place called Jianghu and from there it spread all over the Celestial to reach our days. Some characteristic features are inherent in learning the technique. To bring the technique to perfection takes a lot of time spent in tenacious and hard training. The technique has some positive effects, including the development of strength, significant progress in acquiring stances and motion, quicker response, higher firmness and exactness, which are basic elements of WU SHU. Five small wooden poles of approximately equal size firmly dug into the ground are used to learn MEI HUA ZHUANG. Four poles are situated at the corners of an imaginary square and the fifth one in the square center.

(1) To master the exercise PAN LONG MA⁴⁵, stand with the right foot on the central pole, bend the right leg and squat on it low. It is necessary to set the front part of the foot against the pole, the heel must be raised. Stretch the left leg forward, put the left heel on the right front pole, slightly turn the left toe to the left. The right leg accounts for seven tenth of body weight and the left leg for three tenth. The upper part of the body must be straight, the shoulders must slightly be set forward. While breathing in, the stomach must be pulled in, and the chest thrown out. Hands are open and situated on the waist level, fingers point forward and upward. While doing the exercise, the head must be kept straight, the lips tightly pressed together. You look forward. QI is evenly distributed throughout the body and strength between four limbs (See photo E.1).



Photo E.1

Editor's notes:

⁴⁵ PAN LONG MA, "stance of coiling dragon."

(2) To take the position FU HU MA⁴⁶, it is necessary to raise the torso, to change the position of the left foot for the left front pole, then bend the right leg and shift the main weight of the body on it, and straighten the left leg. The right leg accounts for seven tenth of body weight in the stance FU HU and the left leg for three tenth of it. Both hands take a shape of “tiger claws” (HU ZHAO), the left palm is brought forward, the palm center points downward. While doing the exercise the head must be kept straight, the mouth must be tightly closed. You look straight forward. QI evenly spreads throughout the body and strength fills four limbs. (See photo E.2).



Photo E.2

Editor's notes:

⁴⁶ FU HU MA, “position of taming the tiger.”

(3) YI ZI MA⁴⁷ is the fourth form of MEI HUA ZHUANG and the fifteenth, final, exercise of this section. The left leg stands on the left front pole, the right leg stands on the central pole. Bend both legs in knees and take the position YI (一). Body weight is evenly distributed between both legs. Both arms are in the position of “embracing the Moon” (ZHONG BAO YU). The shoulders are slightly set forward. While doing the exercise, the head must be kept straight, the mouth tightly clenched. You look forward. QI spreads evenly throughout the body. The forearms are crossed in front of the breast, palm centers point outward (See photo E.3).



Photo E.3

Editor's notes:

⁴⁷ YI ZI MA, “stance of the hieroglyph “One” (一)».

Section 2

DI PAN ZHUANG

Terrestrial Poles.

First of all, it should be noted that the method DI PAN ZHUANG is designed exclusively for leg training. Leg techniques are divided into two groups: YIN TUI and YANG TUI. YANG TUI includes five techniques and they do not suit for training with the use of poles. Methods of YANG TUI training are covered in detail in a separate edition. YIN TUI includes nine techniques, “Terrestrial poles” ideally suit for learning them. Take five wooden poles of 1.5 CHI in girth (16 cm in diameter). Firmly dig the poles into the ground, arranging them in form of a plum blossom⁴⁸. The height from the ground to the upper ends must be 3.6 CHIs (120 cm), i.e. be flush with the man chest. During training sessions the following methods are perfected: SHUN FAN SAO TANG “Sweeping with the front and back undercut”, DAO GUA – “Hooking from behind”, ZUO YU GOU LIAN – “Left and right hooking with shin”, FENG GUAN – “Closing gate”, JIAO JIAN – “Cutting with scissors”, BA GEN – “Uprooting”, GUI XI – “Squatting on one knee”. Altogether, there are nine methods. It is difficult to find defense against them and you will win. The efficiency of those methods is extremely high. Below are given the training method and photos.

Editor's notes:

⁴⁸ Four poles in corners of a square, the fifth pole is at the middle.

1. SHUN SAO TANG

Sweeping with Front Undercut.

Shift body weight on the left leg, bend the knee and squat on the left leg.

Stretch the right leg to the right. Tilt the torso forward and set ten fingers of both hands against the ground. Make a fast movement to the right and forward with the right leg in order the front part of the shin to touch the western pole. If you strike so at enemy's legs, he will surely fall down. During a training session it is necessary to alternate right kicks with left ones. In this case the left leg and both arms support body weight. While striking, strain the whole body to fill arms and legs with force (**See photo 1**).



Photo 1

2. FAN SAO TANG

Sweeping with Back Undercut.

Squat on the right leg, touch the ground with five fingers of the right hand. Clench the left hand into fist and bring to the left to amplify the effort of left leg. Stretch the left leg to the left and slightly bend it in knee, then quickly move it back along an arc path. You strike at the southern pole with the lower part of the shin on the side of the calf muscle. If you hit enemy's legs so, he will surely fall down. During a training session alternate right kicks with the left ones. In this

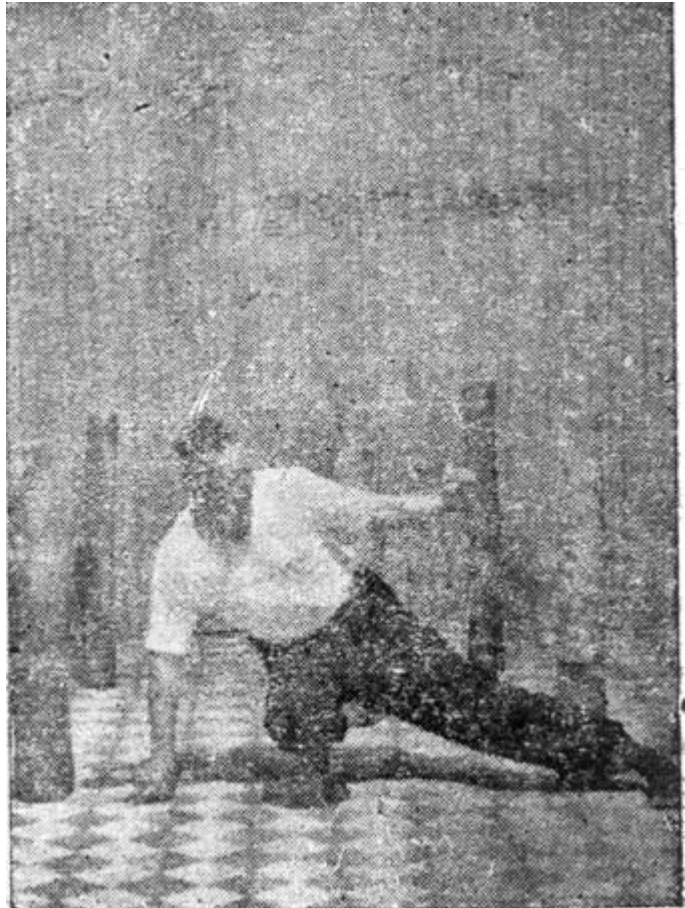


Photo 2

case the right leg and five fingers of the right hand support body weight. The movement of the left leg must be fast and powerful. While striking, it is necessary to strain the whole body to fill arms and legs with force (**See photo 2**).

3. DAO GUA

Hooking from behind.

The left leg stands near the southern pole, the knee is slightly bent, the leg has the shape of an arc. Bring the right leg toward the central pole, the position of the right leg is like that one in the stance of GONG BU. The calf muscle of the right leg is pressed to the central pole. Turn the torso to the right with the face toward the pole. Clench the right hand into fist, press on the pole with the forearm as if you press on the enemy, from the right to the left. The left arm protects



Photo 3

the breast. If, being in this position, you turn the torso to the left and strain the right leg, the enemy will surely fall down. This method resembles the Japanese judo. Concentrate your attention on the right arm, sink QI down into DANTIAN, fill arms and legs with force (**See photo 3**).

4. YU GOU LIAN

Right Hooking with the Shin.

Feet stand in parallel, the right part of the pelvis is near the central pole. The face is turned toward the western pole which is treated according to the method. Slightly bend both knees, draw the buttocks back and slightly raise them. “Hook” the western pole with the right leg. Stretch your right arm forward with its palm turned down, all five fingers adjoin each other. Press the right arm to the pole at the level of $\frac{3}{4}$ of its height with the side part of the forearm. The right leg is in front in respect to the enemy and the right arm behind (on the side of his back). A force couple creates moment of forces, its



Photo 4

effect causes the enemy to fall down. In the initial position 60% of body weight is on the left leg and 40% on the right one. In the course of doing the method the right leg bends and the left leg straightens, which results in 60 % of body weight on the right leg and 40 % on the left one. It is necessary to strain the whole body to fill arms and leg with force. Your attention is concentrated on the western pole (**See photo 4**).

5. ZUO GOU LIAN

Left Hooking with Shin.

Turn by 180 degrees, facing the central pole. Bring the left leg forward and “hook” the central pole from the left to the right. Stretch the left arm forward, the palm is turned down, fingers adjoin each other, press the side of the forearm to the central pole. The right arm is bent in elbow and protects the breast. If we pull the left leg toward ourselves and make a push to the left with the left arm, we shall get a force couple which creates moment of forces, its effect causes the enemy to fall down. The distribution of body weight is as follows: 60% is on



Photo 5

the right leg, 40% on the left one. It is necessary to strain the whole body to fill arms and leg with force. Stare at the central pole (**See photo 5**).

6. FENG GUAN

Closing Gate.

The right leg steps forward, immediately the left leg steps forward too, toward the southern pole. Press the right hand to the southern pole from the right, hook the southern pole from the left with your left leg. The fingers of the right hand are straight and adjoin each other, the palm is turned up, the edge of the palm on the side of the little finger adjoins the pole at the level of $\frac{4}{5}$ of its height. The right arm presses to the left, the left leg to the right. A force couple, acting on the upper and lower parts of the pole, creates moment of forces which causes the enemy to fall down. The left hand is clenched into fist and located

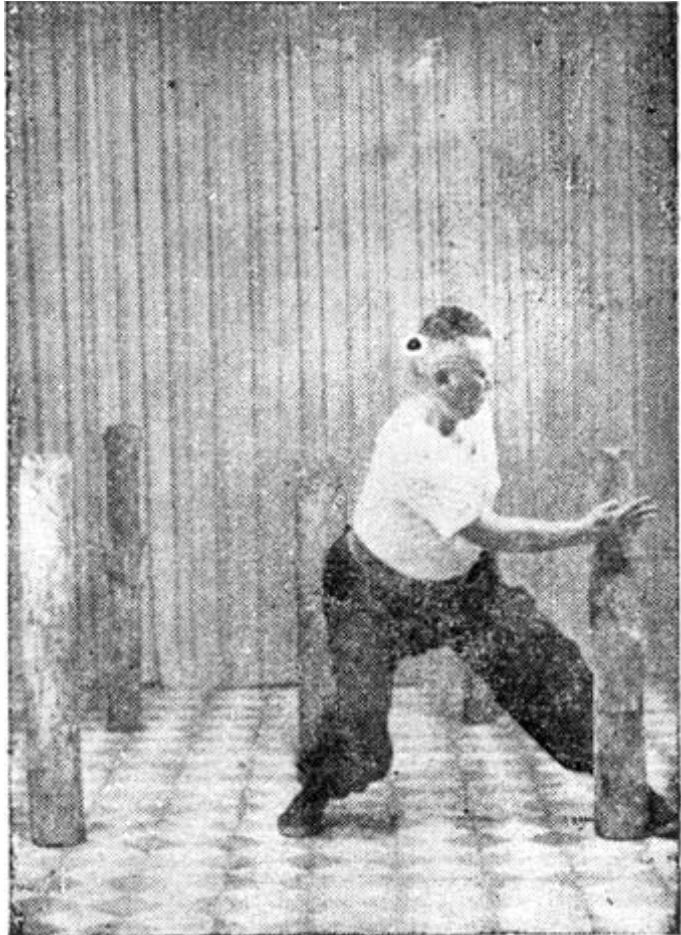


Photo 6

on the side of the waist. The distribution of body weight is as follows: 60 % is on the right leg and 40 % on the left leg. Strain the whole body to fill arms and legs with force. Stare at the southern pole (**See photo 6**).

7. JIAO JIAN

Cutting with Scissors.

Turn your right side to the central pole and then lie on the ground on your left side, the head being in the south-western direction. The left buttock is tightly pressed to the ground; set the left arm (with the forearm and hand) and five finger of the right hand against the ground. Place the left foot behind the pole and the right leg in front of the pole. If you apply effort in opposite direction (the left leg presses to the left, the right leg to the right), the enemy will fall down. In the course of a training session it is recommended to change positions of legs. The left buttock and both arms support body weight. The head is

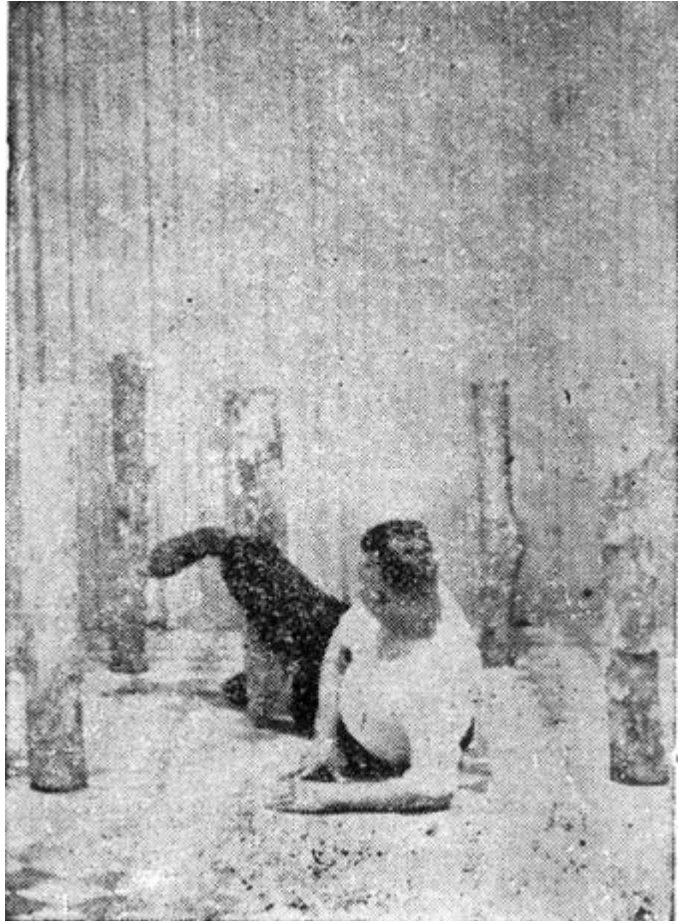


Photo 7

raised a little; look at the right leg. It is necessary to strain the whole body to fill both arms and legs with force (**See photo 7**).

8. BA GEN

Uprooting.

Roll over from the previous position on the ground to the left and lie on your right body side. The right buttock is tightly pressed to the ground, set the right arm (with the forearm and hand) and five fingers of the left hand against the ground. Hook the lower part of the pole with the right foot and press with the sole of the left foot on the pole in the front. It looks like you hook an enemy's leg with your right foot and make a push to his stomach with your left leg. The effort of the right leg is directed toward you and the effort of the left leg from you. That is the way of using the method "Uprooting". In the

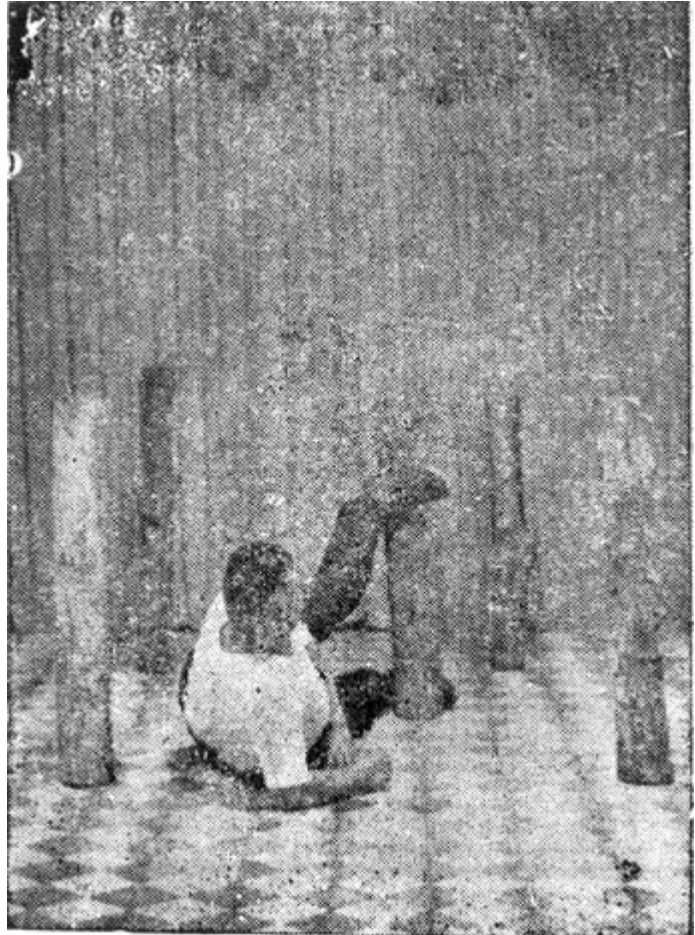


Photo 8

course of exercising it is recommended to change positions of legs. The head must be raised a little, look at the left foot. Strain the whole body to fill both legs with force (**See photo 8**).

9. GUI XI

Squatting on One Knee.

Quickly stand up from the previous position BA GEN, turn to the left by 180 degrees, bring the right leg forward and hook the lower part of the northern pole with the right foot, slightly bending the right leg in knee. Strongly press on northern pole with the right knee. If



Photo 9

the enemy kicks, you dodge to the right, hook his supporting leg with your right foot, press on the enemy's knee with your right knee and fracture his leg. At that your right arm embraces the upper part of the pole (the enemy's waist) and the left arm protects your breast. QI must be sunk into DANTIAN; strain arms and legs (**See photo 9**).

Chapter V.

LONG HU YI QI GONG

QI GONG of Dragon and Tiger.

QI GONG practice has come down from great antiquity and basically has natural source. The practice is aimed at the improvement of the man and serves for the regulation of the human body; besides, it has a great health-improving effect. From the very beginning those methods and techniques were united under common name SHOU GONG, which means “The art of reaching longevity”. This name came from the epoch of Late HAN (25–220 AD); to say more correctly, it originates from treatises of healer Hua Tuo⁴⁹ where he describes methods of reaching immortality. Exercises from QI GONG I describe in this chapter are an initial stage in acquiring knowledge that was left for us by Hua Tuo.

Books dated from the dynasty Sung (960-1279) mention master Zhao who was able to perfectly use QI GONG techniques. He belonged to the school of the YANG family art which founder lived during the dynasty Jin (265-420). That technique was developed on the basis of several widespread trends in QI GONG by means of their new interpretation and unification. Several exercises

Editor's notes:

⁴⁹ Hua Tuo (141? - 208) is a famous physician and a follower of Taoism. Lived at the end of the dynasty Eastern Han. Was the first to do surgeries in cases when cauterization, acupuncture or medication gave no effect. Was the first physician to use narcosis and anaesthesia for surgery. Besides, he created a complex of "Plays of Five Animals" (WUQINXI) owing which through the imitation of movements of different animals - bear, tiger, deer, monkey, and crane the energy Qi properly circulates in a human organism and that cause effects of rejuvenation and invigoration.

from BA DUAN JIN⁵⁰ also underlie that technique. This chapter presents some exercises from that school of QI GONG.

Speaking on QI GONG, one has to realize that its development was far from being uniform; in the course of its history different schools and trends sprang up, that has led to a great variety of styles, techniques and methods. However, the general requirement was and remains to be as follows: in order QI GONG exercises to become genuine QI GONG exercises, one must do them from the early morning till late in night and start exercising, still lying in bed and doing those exercises several times during a day. Systematic training will result in filling four limbs with QI, muscle strengthening, improving health. It is an external effect of QI GONG practice. The internal effect consists in that QI fills the whole body and evenly circulates inside it, developing the system of breathing and strengthening internal organs. Health-improving and restorative effect of QI GONG practice is much higher than that one of various potions. Thus, it may be said that QI GONG is the most effective system of body recovery and development.

(A) QIE LONG GONG

Exercises “Dragon Lying on its Side”

1) The exercise should be done each day early in the morning, best of all, at dawn when the sun has not risen yet. It is necessary to do the exercise once during a certain length of time. The time for the exercise must gradually be increased depending on your capabilities. One should not speed up or just mark time. The method of doing the exercise is as follows: set the right palm (or fist) against the ground (the surface of a bed), place the left hand on the

Editor's notes:

⁵⁰ BA DUAN JIN, “Eight pieces of brocade”, a complex of eight QI GONG exercises, originates from Shaolin.

side of your waist, ten toes of both feet are also set against a surface. The right arm and both legs are straight; the whole body from the head down to feet

forms a straight line. The torso is turned to the ground with its right side and upward with its left side. As soon as you take the correct position

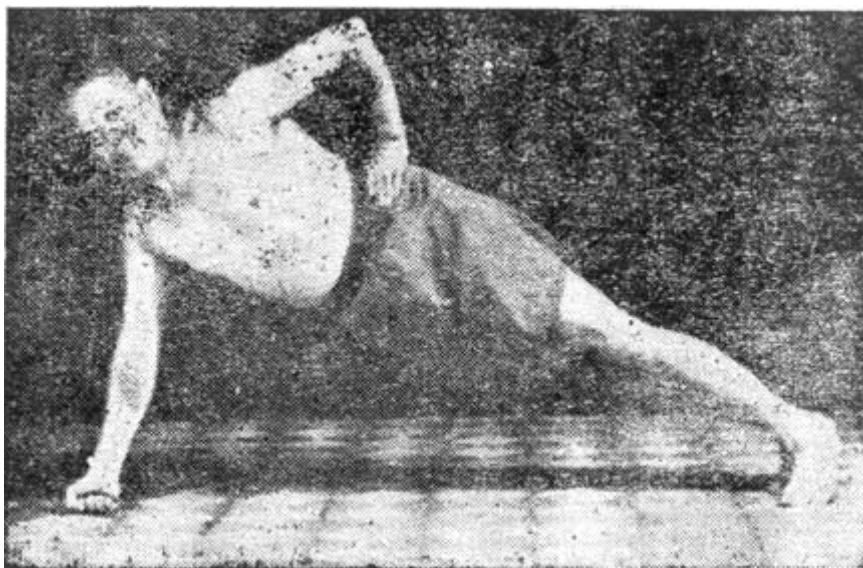


Photo A.1

keep it without any movements. Take a full breath-in, then breathe out in order “fresh” QI to descend to DANTIAN and spread throughout the body from there. The mouth and eyes must tightly be closed. After doing the exercise for the right arm, repeat it for the left arm. This exercise is the first step on the way to acquiring QIE LONG GONG (See **photo A.1**).

2) All requirements for this exercise fully coincide with the above requirements,

except the fact that not a fist or palm but thumb, forefinger, middle finger and fourth finger of the right hand must be set against the surface.

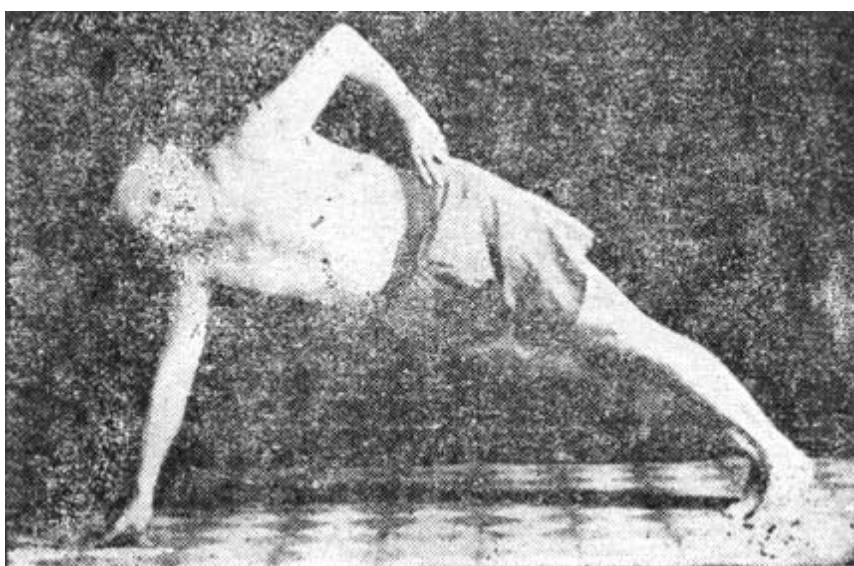


Photo A.2

At that ten toes of both feet must touch the surface, or five fingers of the right foot are set

against the surface but the left foot is raised a little and lies on the right foot. While doing this exercise, the right arm supports the main weight of the body. After doing the exercise for the right arm, repeat it for the left arm. The exercise is the second stage of acquiring QIE LONG GONG (See **photo A.2**).

3) This exercise is fully similar to two previous ones with the following exceptions: clench the right hand into fist, rest on the surface only with two

straight fingers – the thumb and the forefinger. At that two fingers of the right hand support seven tenths of body weight. Five fingers of the right foot are set against the

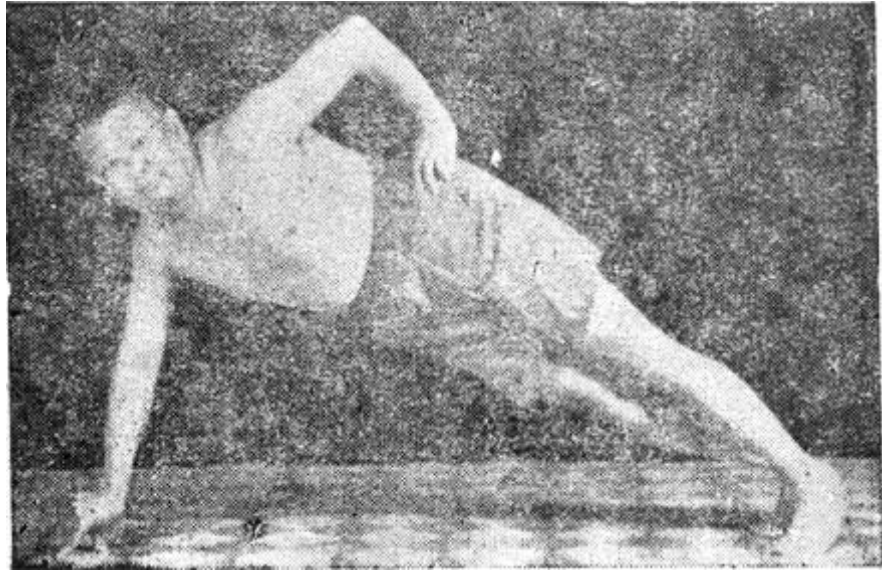


Photo A.3

surface, they support three tenths of body weight. The exercise is called “The method to defeat the Sky with fingers”. The exercise must be done both for the right and left arms. It is the final exercise of the first section. Systematically doing the exercises described in this section, one can reach great mastery (See **photo A.3**).

(B) FU LONG GONG

Exercises “Dragon cuddles up to the Ground”

The method of training presented here develops and augments effect received from previous exercises. First of all, it is strengthening of wrists and hands as well as the development of the chest and strengthening of entire arms – from shoulders to finger tips. The essence of this method is setting hands against a surface. While doing all three exercises below described, body weight is distributed between four limbs and the main force comes from the forearms which develop due to movements forth and back. It should be taken into consideration that when doing the complex of exercises one must be supported by completely straightened arms. If the arms are, though a little, but bent in elbows, the effect of the exercises decreases⁵¹. After acquiring this complex of exercises one may proceed to techniques of higher order. The exercises should be done early in the morning, immediately after waking up, or when you just get up; they must be done certain number of times with some effort. These exercises will be useful in case of loss of eyesight. Besides, they promote steady QI circulation throughout the body. Doing systematically that complex of exercises promotes longevity. In ancient times this technique was highly esteemed as one of the most effective technique. I describe below that unique method.

1) Unlike the complex of exercises presented in the previous section, all exercises of this section start from the left arm. Set the left fist against a surface, then set the right fist against a surface and support yourself with both fists. Straighten both legs and set ten toes against the surface. In this position body weight by eight tenths rests on arms and two tenths on legs. Force is

Editor's notes:

⁵¹ The upper position of the body on straight arms is meant.

distributed throughout the body and concentrates in four limbs. QI, circulating during a breath-in and breath-out, evenly fills the body and regulates blood

flow. Bend the arms in elbows, then unbend them, do cyclic movements by bending and unbending arms.

Concurrently the upper part of the body moves up

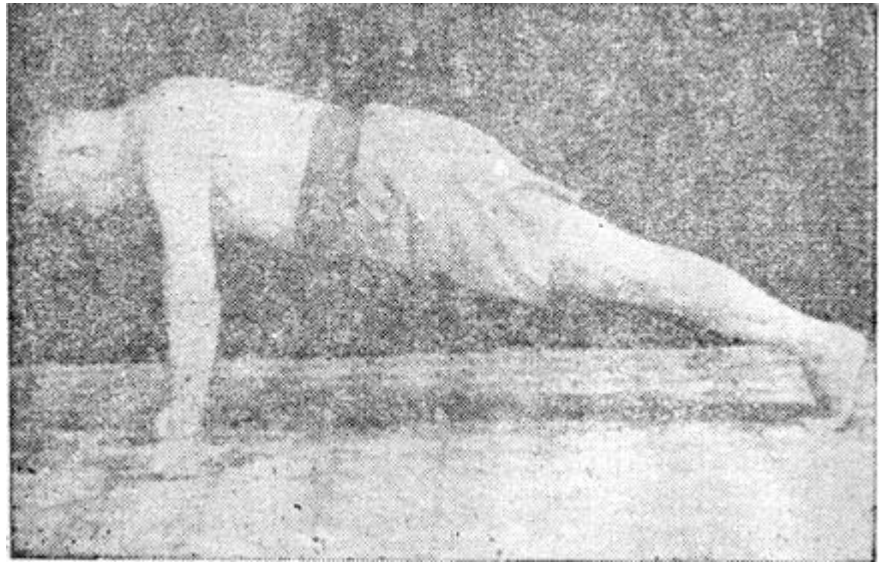


Photo B.1

and down, straining arms and legs. When the arms bend, elbows must be kept near the body, not far than two or three CUNs (6.6 – 9.9 cm) from side ribs (See photo B.1).

2) The method of doing this exercise is similar to the first exercise of this

section. The only difference is in that while doing the exercise one must set the thumbs and the forefingers of both hands against a surface.

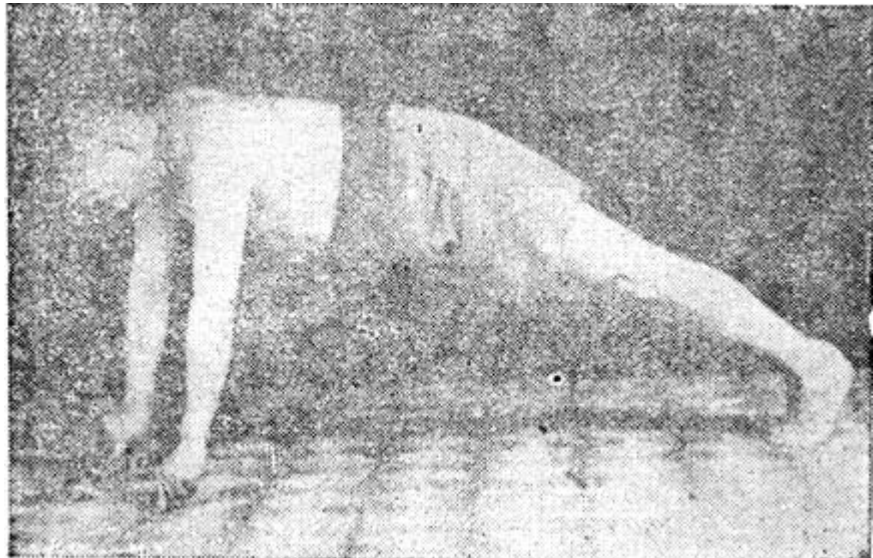


Photo B.2

Both feet are

firmly set against a surface with all ten toes. Body weight by seven or eight tenths rests on arms and two or three tenths on legs. In a higher position (with straight arms) the torso should slightly be shifted back (See photo B.2).

3) The method of doing this exercise is similar to two previous ones in principle. The difference is in that while doing it, one should set only two forefingers

against a surface, other fingers are clenched into fist.

Both legs are straight. When

you do the exercise, the

transformation of

body weight into

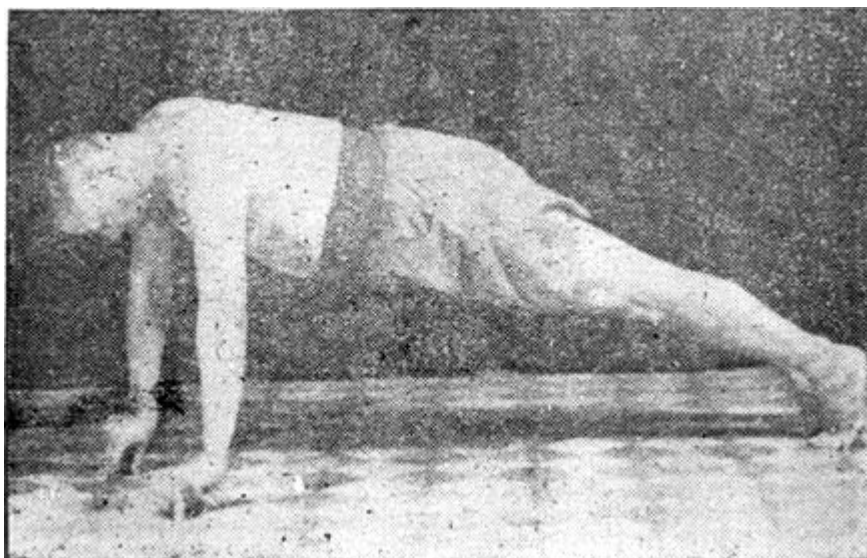


Photo B.3

force occurs. This method is different in principle from other methods, as it gives a unique therapeutic effect. It is called “To defeat the Sky with one finger” (See **photo B.3**).

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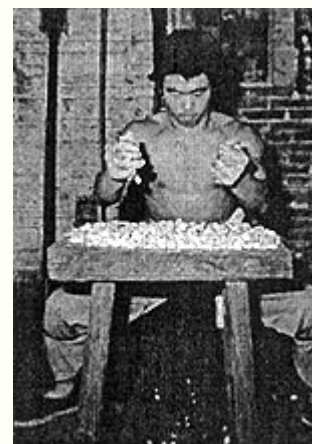
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